

THE QUAKER,

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And Exponent of the Letter-note Method.

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THE QUAKER,

July 1st, 1877.

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MUSIC—

Hark!—what mean those holy Voices?

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First Steps in Musical Composition.—(continued from last Number.)

269. As regards the effect of the various intervals, only a very general statement is possible: minor intervals are, of course, generally more mournful or tender than major, fourths and fifths are bolder and more massive than seconds. To attempt to assign some particular effect to each kind of interval would, however, only mislead the student; even a verbal description of the effect of each particular interval is inexpedient, for, like the colour of the chameleon, it is continually changing, being influenced by the combination with other intervals, by the harmonies, by the direction in which the interval is taken (whether upward or downward), and by other causes: this variability of effect is, in fact, one of the things which give music its infinite variety of expression. Certain intervals—viz., the pluperfect fourth, and the major sevenths, are usually avoided, being considered *unwieldy or harsh*, and some object to the imperfect fifth for a similar reason: these intervals have their uses, however,—the major seventh (do tr), for instance, is employed near the end of one of the songs in Mendelssohn's "13th Psalm" in a manner which is expressive of intense *anxiety*.

270. Sounds which have a harmonic relation to each other are also related melodically: for example, the sounds which form a triad are agreeable whether heard simultaneously or in succession. On this point General Thompson suggests that melody is only a kind of retrospective harmony, depending upon a sense of harmonious relation to sounds which have gone before.

COHERENCE.

271. Two members, in themselves faultless, may, when heard in succession, fail to please through want of coherence; and, in order to secure it, not only must the general sentiment of both members correspond (either by similarity or by contrast), but the mode of expressing the sentiment must also correspond in some particular. Therefore, while we take care to obtain *variety* in order to avoid becoming tedious, we must retain *unity* in order to secure coherence.

272. As respects the aesthetics of the question, the composer relies upon his own sense of what is right and fitting, guided by his experience. The student will aid himself by diligently studying good music, carefully analysing, comparing and observing. The mode of analysing melody is explained at the end of this Chapter.

273. As regards the merely mechanical side of the matter, analysis of melody will show that coherence is usually obtained by the fulfilment of one or more of the following conditions:—

- I.—Absolute identity or close similarity in rhythm. Provided only the rhythm itself has sufficient individuality to establish an identity, two members thus allied have, apart from other conditions, a very strong bond of connection. (Par. 252).
- II.—Repeating a member with some variation, or, what amounts to the same thing, taking the commencement of a member and adding thereto a different conclusion.
- III.—A precise imitation, so many degrees higher or lower, occurring not oftener than once in immediate succession, as in the third and fourth phrases of fig. 138: if introduced oftener, it is varied in some way the second time, as in fig. 136.
- IV.—A dissimilarity—the notes of one member rising where they fall in another, and *vice versa*.
- V.—A general, not precise, resemblance as regards the rising and falling of the notes. For phrases, this is a very useful way: it is exemplified in fig. 173 continued by fig. 174 or 175, and in many of the figs. in Chapters VI. and VII.
- VI.—Diatonic passages (*i.e.* moving by intervals not larger than a second). Melody which moves thus has a certain degree of coherence through the mere fact that it is a diatonic passage.

The first and second of these conditions apply to any kind of member: the others are effective for phrases, generally for sections also, but might or might not operate in the case of a period. The efficiency of the following is more apparent in phrases and feet than in larger members:—

- VII.—Commencing or ending two immediately succeeding members on the same note.
- VIII.—Commencing or ending two immediately succeeding members on a note which belongs to the same triad. (For the reason, refer to paragraph 270).

ix.—Allotting to two immediately succeeding members sounds which belong to the same triad. (*For a similar reason*).

x.—Moving by the interval of a second when commencing the succeeding member. (*As stated for the 6th condition*).

274. These conditions, and doubtless others also, secure, or aid in securing, coherence. The first and the fifth are more generally useful than the others, in fact even the latter will not bear much repetition without becoming tedious; the fourth is perceivable only by the educated ear; and the remainder must be intermixed one with the other in order to preserve variety.

275. In illustration of these points let us take a phrase which, moving by skips, does not fulfil the sixth condition, and which, as the notes are all of the same length, has nothing very distinctive in the rhythm, and, therefore, cannot be much influenced thereby, and let us add a phrase or two by way of experiment. Calcott uses the phrase shown in fig. 173 and adds to it fig. 174, Smart employs the same phrase and supplements it with fig. 175: both of these supplementary phrases fulfil condition 5, and both cohere well with fig. 173 notwithstanding one of them varies the rhythm. Suppose, instead of preserving a *general* resemblance in the rising and falling of the notes, we fulfil the third condition and make a precise imitation, as in fig. 176, we obtain *unity*, certainly, but more than is desirable in this case; for the harmonic relation which exists between MI DO and SOL MI is, in a short member, sufficient in itself to cause a strong resemblance (*Par. 270*), moreover, bold marked intervals are employed, not quiet seconds as in fig. 136, and any resemblance which may exist is rendered stronger in consequence. Fig. 177 avoids the first of these objections, and is a precise imitation of fig. 173: it is preferable to fig. 176, but does not possess the graceful variety of fig. 174. Fig. 178, on the other hand, fulfills *none* of the conditions except the first, and as this condition does not operate (the rhythm not possessing sufficient individuality to establish an identity) the result is unsatisfactory.

RELATIVE FITNESS.

276. Besides the principle of *variety in unity*, the student should keep constantly in view that of *relative fitness*. For example, the style of the rhythm should correspond to that of the intervals employed, for both tune and rhythm are capable of endless variety. As already observed, intervals differ in effect; moreover, tune which moves diatonically is widely different from that which proceeds with the stride of a colossus: in like manner, rhythm consisting of crotchets only has an effect of its own; an intermixture of quavers has another; of dotted quavers and semiquavers, another; and so on, *ad infinitum*. In the matter of number, the composer is, in vocal music, in some degree subservient to the poet, but in tune and rhythm he is *absolute*; and the result, when these two elements are well matched, is delicious.

277. Relative fitness also requires that the style of the harmony should be in keeping with that of the melody: they ought, in fact, to mutually assist each other. The same principle further demands that the whole tune—melody and harmony; feeling, style and mechanism—shall breathe the spirit of the words, if it is a vocal composition; or convey the intended sentiments, if the music is instrumental. The composer, therefore, having ascertained the nature of his subject, and decided how to treat it, has (viewing the tune both as a whole and in portions) to determine which portions shall stand out in relief, and which remain in the background; which shall lead up to something succeeding, and which form a climax to what precedes; which resemble, and which contrast; and, having thus mentally conceived his design, he endeavours to find the most suitable means for its expression, not resting content until this has been attained.

Fig. 173.



Fig. 174.



Fig. 175.



Fig. 176.



Fig. 177.



Fig. 178.



278. Relative fitness also takes cognisance of the endings of the sections. As the last two notes determine pretty nearly what chords shall form the cadence, it is of importance to arrange the endings of the sections so as to secure well-balanced variety. In inventing a melody, therefore, the element of harmony is usually present in the mind of the composer, and he moulds the former accordingly.

FEELING.

279. Feeling is the soul of the music—the spirit which pervades it: without it, all else is dead. If a composer does not *feel*, it is as impossible for him to write well, as for one who has nothing to say to speak to the purpose: in such a case, the best course is to leave it unsaid. All we can accomplish, therefore, is to show the student the best way of stating what he has to say, leaving it to him to evolve from his own inner consciousness the idea which he wishes to express. This we have endeavoured to do in the preceding paragraphs: it rests with the student to carry principles into practice, and acquire fluency of expression by actually trying to express himself.

280. HINTS TO THE STUDENT.

(a.) In studying the composition of melody, excellent practice is afforded if, instead of roaming at random over the seven sounds of the scale, with liberty to touch those of other keys also, the student limits himself to three or four sounds (as DO RE MI FA), and weaves them into as many different melodies as possible, varying the exercise by using different kinds of rhythm, and studying other sounds and other intervals. Afterwards, let the student write thus with five sounds only, then with six, and so on. Such practice, methodically carried out, is perhaps the most direct and certain way of attaining skill in the composition of melody.

NUMBER.

(b.) Departure from the principles explained in paragraphs 253 to 263 are permitted, or at all events practised. The rule, however, is the rule, and departures therefrom the exception; and, in deciding how far and under what circumstances it may be departed from, an examination of some well known tunes may help us. The tune *Hdmsley* is an example of what we may term *uncomfortable* number. Reckoning two beats to a measure, each measure is a foot; and the first period, being repeated, makes two periods divisible into four sections, eight phrases, and sixteen feet, all in regular form; but the remaining period cannot be divided into equal sections, and contains five phrases and ten feet. The tunes *God save the Queen*, *Olivet*, and *Moscow*, on the other hand, although containing irregular members of a similar nature, do not strike the ear as objectionable; and, as all three tunes are of the same metre, we print them together, partly for the sake of comparison, and partly to show how much variety can be obtained by rhythm alone. The first principal division of *God save the Queen* and *Olivet* consists of a period which cannot be divided into equal sections, and is, therefore, a contracted period, containing three phrases and six feet: that of *Moscow* comprises three phrases and eight feet. The remainder of each tune consists of a regular period divisible into two sections, four phrases and eight feet. The question naturally arises, why is the number in *Hdmsley* unsatisfactory if that of the other tunes is not? Probably for two reasons—(1.) Because a division into five phrases is *more complex* than a division into three; moreover, the oddness is long sustained—sections divided into five feet (as in figs. 171 and 172) the ear will excuse; but periods are larger than phrases, and the ear cannot so easily recognise the beginnings and endings of the divisions. (2.) In *Hdmsley*, the regular divisions come first, leading the ear to expect the remainder to correspond; and, when the balance of phraseology is not preserved, the effect is disappointing. But in *God save the Queen* and the other tunes, the irregular divisions appear first, and, if there is any disappointment in what succeeds, it is of the nature of an agreeable disappointment. Further, the fact of the irregular portion appearing first makes it in a sense regular, or at all events *normal*, and the second period may be looked upon as bearing to the first the relation which an extended period bears to a regular division, as it is extended legitimately by the repetition of a phrase (p. 260, 2); for, in *God save the Queen*, the fifth phrase repeats the fourth with a variation, and in the other tunes, *with-out*.

God save the Queen.



Olivet.



Moscow.



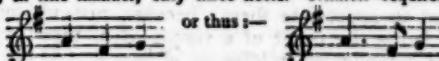


Moscow, however, has this peculiarity:—although the first period contains eight feet, just like a regular period, for reasons presently stated it is not divisible into sections, but forms two extended phrases and one regular phrase. The explanation of the irregularities already given applies: the irregular phrases come first; the members are short; and, further, the rhythm and the motion of the melody clearly mark their terminations.

CONTRACTED AND EXTENDED MEMBERS.

(c.) As a section can be contracted to three feet, and a phrase can be extended to the same length, the student will naturally enquire, "What distinguishes the one from the other?" A phrase (provided it does not terminate simultaneously with a section) is supposed to convey an incomplete musical idea; a section, an idea more or less complete. This rule, however, does not always hold; and, as the first two members of *Moscow* provide a case in point, it may aid the student if we state our reasons for terming them extended phrases. We cannot consider the first period in *Moscow* to consist of two contracted sections and one regular phrase, because we must divide wholly into sections or wholly into phrases, our object being to reduce the period to members of the same denomination even although they may differ in length. But if we divide into sections, we must consider the period to consist of two contracted sections and one *doubly contracted* section—a complicated mode of reckoning which is quite out of the question when we can divide more simply and naturally into two extended phrases and one regular phrase. If, therefore, the student will recollect that a member "*is known by the company it keeps*," and will endeavour to analyse without unnecessary complexity, he is pretty certain to avoid error.

(d.) It is further worthy of notice that these phrases in *Moscow* are extended members of the principle explained in paragraph 260. Observe that the first foot contains three notes: the remainder of the phrase, although extended to two feet, contains, in like manner, only three notes. *Number* required the composer to write the last three notes thus:—



ANALYSIS OF MELODY.

(e.) Commence by studying tunes in which the number is clearly marked, and easily recognised: music set to ordinary rhyme is generally sufficiently definite in this respect. First, determine what note *really* represents the beat, taking the average rhythm, and remembering that a signature of two-four is sometimes really four-eight, four-four really two-two, &c.; also taking into consideration the rate of movement. If the time is double or quadruple, the foot will comprise two beats; if the time is triple, the foot will include three beats. Having ascertained what is a foot, proceed to form larger members, remembering that if a given number of feet will not form equal phrases, they may be combined into equal sections, and similarly as regards periods, as explained in paragraph 258. In higher class music the divisions are often less easily recognised, but the information given in paragraph 260 will aid, and thus by occasionally counting one measure as equivalent to two, or vice versa, the division into members is determined. The labour is well worth the pains, for one grand characteristic which distinguishes excellence from mediocrity on the part of a performer is the power to discern the composer's intention so far as to recognise where each phrase begins and ends. It is, however, necessary to analyse *correctly*; for instance, the first period in *Moscow* contains eight feet, and if the analyst were to divide it into four phrases, he would be altogether wrong. For this reason we have advised the inexperienced to operate upon tunes set to rhyme: in other music, the analyst looks for the natural and obvious points of rest in the melody, in doing which the cadences assist if the music is harmonized, and the cadence-like progressions of the melody if it is unaccompanied.

(f.) In order to study the phrase'ogy of a tune, or the balance and coherence of its members, write the *periods*, one underneath the other; next, do the same with the *sections*; and then the same with the *phrases* as in figs 173 to 178: in some cases it may be advantageous to extend the same operation to the *feet*. By thus comparing together the corresponding members, you will discover many similarities, analogies and contrasts which might otherwise escape notice.

(g.) In analysing melody, it is desirable to obtain the following information :—

- I.—What are the members into which the tune is divided?
- II.—Are there any resemblances or contrasts discoverable in the members?
- III.—How is coherence secured?
- IV.—Are there any irregularities in the number, and if so, are they balanced?
- V.—Which is the most important and conspicuous member in the tune?
- VI.—Whereabouts is the culminating point, or climax, of the tune?
- VII.—What is the sentiment or sentiments expressed?

Differences of opinion will probably prevail respecting the last three points, the last especially : but even the attempt to answer these questions will benefit the analyst.

NOTICE.—The commencement of Chap. IX. is unavoidably postponed until next month.

Student's Gleanings.—Melody.

THREE are some melodies which are attractive of themselves, and without extraneous ornament, even that of accompaniment; but they are very few. There are others which, though purely melodious, require the assistance of harmony of some sort, in order to produce effect. There are others, again, the origin of which is in the harmony that accompanies it. A person who is not insensible to the effect of sounds easily seizes the character of melodies of the first kind; hence they quickly become popular. Melodies which do not produce their effect without the aid of an accompaniment of some sort, do not require great musical attainments in order to be felt; but still they can only please ears which are accustomed to hear music. As to melodies of the third kind, which we may call *harmonious melodies*, musicians alone are competent to appreciate them; because, instead of being the result of a simple idea, they are complicated of diverse elements, and consequently require a sort of analysis in order to be comprehended—an analysis which a musician makes with the rapidity of lightning, but which people in general can only make slowly and with difficulty. They are not the less real melodies, and it is wrong to cry out, as is frequently done, that there is no air whatever in a piece which contains a melody of this kind: we ought, in such a case, to say only that the air is not readily perceived. To attempt to catch the spirit of it would add to our enjoyment, and would not require a very long study; but our natural indolence exercises its influence even over our pleasures.

Let any one, instead of giving himself up without reserve to the vague pleasure which he receives from an air or a duet, set himself to examine its construction, to consider the arrangement and the repetition of its phrases, the principal rhythms, the cadences

&c. At first, the labour will be painful, and will break in upon enjoyment; but by degrees a habit of attention will be formed which will soon become spontaneous. Then that which, at first, seemed to be merely a matter of dry calculation will become the foundation of a ready judgment, and the source of the most lively gratification.

There is an objection which is very freely made, and which must not be left without an answer, as it is specious, and may give rise to doubts even in well-constituted minds. "Beware of all this science," say those who are under the dominion of an unconquerable indolence, "it only weakens your pleasure. The arts procure us enjoyment only so far as they are unforeseen: do not seek, therefore, to acquire a knowledge, the result of which will enable you to judge rather than to feel." All this reasoning is founded upon the following axiom of philosophy: "Feeling is the result of perception; judgment, of comparison." But the improvement of the organ of hearing which results from an observation of the effect of sound, is nothing more than the means of perceiving better, and of thereby increasing the amount of its enjoyments. For this reason, attention is necessary for all, while none can derive much advantage from imperfect knowledge. Everybody passes judgment upon music: some under the influence of a blind instinct, and very hastily; others by means of a cultivated taste, and with reflection. Who will venture to say that the first is better than the last?

The exercises cease of themselves when the organ is instructed: we no longer need leading-strings when we have learned to walk. The analysis is effected as quick as thought when the habit is acquired: it becomes an element in our mode of feeling, and is itself transformed into a sensation.

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Instruments and Instrumentation.—(Continued from last Number.)

THE third species of wind instruments which are played with an open mouth-piece comprises the *horn*, several kinds of *trumpets*, the *trombone*, the *serpent*, the *ophicleide*, and the *saxhorn*.

The *cornet*, or old buck's horn, is the original form of the horn, and was used to play hunting airs in the old operas: it is an instrument shaped like a horn, and pierced with holes. The hunting horn is said to have been invented in France in 1680, and at first was only used in the chase; but having been introduced into Germany certain improvements were effected, and it began to be employed in musical performances about 1730. At that time it could produce only a few sounds; but, in 1760, a German named Hampl discovered that an additional number of sounds could be produced by partly closing with the hand the open portion—the bell—of the instrument: this led skilful artists to study how the capabilities of the horn could be developed. Haltenhoff, another German, greatly improved this instrument by adding a grooved sliding-tube, which restores the precision of the sounds when they are rendered too sharp by the warmth of the instrument.

Only certain sounds are *open* in the horn; the others, which are obtained by the hand, are duller and are termed *stopped* sounds. But, as in certain keys the stopped sounds are those called for most frequently (in which case the instrument would have little power), *crooks* have been invented—portions of bent tube which, being added to the instrument, *lengthen* it and transpose it into the required key. For instance, suppose the horn is in C, lengthening its tube by adding a crook will lower it to B flat; a longer crook will make it in A; a still longer crook, in G, and so on; and in each case all the sounds which, in the key of C, are open in the horn are open in the other key also. The performer, therefore, always plays in the key of C, adding the crook which effects the necessary transposition.

Through the great variety of its resources, the horn is an exceedingly useful instrument. Both energetic and tender, it is alike suitable for the expression of the more violent passions and the softer sentiments. Equally well adapted for solos and for the full orchestra, it can be modified in numberless ways, but requires to be thoroughly understood in order to exhibit its best characteristics. The art of writing for the horn, so as to develop all its resources, is an art comparatively new, and which Rossini has carried to perfection. Often, the first horn plays as if for one key, and the second as if for another, in order to obtain the greatest number of open notes. Thus four horns are sometimes

used in large orchestras, two in the proper key, and two in that of its dominant, &c.

The *trumpet* is a soprano variety of the horn, as its compass is an octave higher. Although more limited in its resources than the horn, since none of its sounds are produced by stopping with the hand, it is quite as useful in many cases; its quality is more silvery, clear, and penetrating than the horn, and the effect of neither instrument can be supplied by the other. Their union is sometimes productive of the happiest combinations. Formerly, the cavalry trumpet was the only kind of this instrument, and for many years it was the only kind employed in the opera. About 1770, improved trumpets were brought from Germany by the two brothers Braun; and since that period, the cavalry trumpet has disappeared from the orchestra. At the commencement of the present century, semi-circular trumpets were manufactured, which were, in fact, simply small horns: the sounds of these instruments had not the brilliancy of the others.

Like the horn, the trumpet is played in different keys by means of crooks. Various attempts to increase its resources having been made, an Englishman at last hit upon the expedient of adding keys to it, like those of the oboe or clarinet, and his experiments were completely successful: only he created a new instrument which, in the quality of its tone, differed greatly from the common trumpet, and he designated his keyed trumpet a *bugle horn*. This instrument, upon which melodies can be executed as upon the clarinet and oboe, was employed with success in military music, and even in the opera: Rossini has made a happy use of it in the first act of *Semiramide*.

The principle of the construction of keyed trumpets being once discovered, it was clear that it was capable of application to other instruments of the same kind, but larger in size, so as to form the alto, tenor and bass of the trumpet. This family of instruments received the name of *ophicleide*. Their union provides fine effects, not obtained from the other brass instruments which have not similar means of modulation.

The compass of the alto and tenor ophicleides extends from the undermost G in the bass staff to C in the treble staff: that of the bass ophicleide from C below the bass staff to G in the treble, or higher. In many respects the effects of the ophicleide resemble that of the trombone (next noticed) but the tone is more mellow and less piercing. It has a chromatic scale, and is sometimes used for solos.

The *trombone*, is another kind of instrument capable of producing all the notes as open sounds: by means of a moveable crook which works like a double telescope, the player

is enabled to produce any required sound. Three kinds of trombones are employed in the orchestra—the alto, the compass of which is from C in the bass staff to C in the treble; the tenor, from E below the bass staff to G in the treble, or higher; and the bass, from C underneath the bass staff to F (the first space) in the treble. Their tone is more dry, hard, and energetic than that of the ophicleides; but when properly used they produce good effects which are not obtainable from any other instrument: they are also very serviceable for strengthening the bass. The trombone plays in every key, and the music for it is written with key-signatures in the usual way.

The *serpent* was invented in 1590, by Edme Gaillaume, a canon of Auxerre; and has received its name from its serpentine form. Its construction is faulty in many respects: some of its tones are false, and by the side of notes which are very powerful there are others which are extremely feeble. It is a bass instrument: in the hands of a good player, its compass extends from B flat below the bass staff to C in the treble.

The *cornet-a-piston* is, as its name implies, a horn with pistons added so as to increase the capabilities of the instrument. The contrivance of crooks (applied to the horn as already explained) is ingenious, and might fulfil every requirement if music did not modulate, or if, in a change of key, there was time to change the crooks: but this is seldom the case. For this reason, the composer is obliged either to suppress the horn parts at places where they could contribute very good effects, or else use

the stopped sounds which are too weak for the purpose. This inconvenience of the common horn induced Stoelzel to attempt its improvement, and he hit upon the idea of adding to it pistons, by means of which a communication could be opened at will between the horn and a longer or shorter portion of the additional tubes, thereby obtaining all the notes as open sounds. The improvement met with general approbation, and the *cornet-a-piston* is now universally employed: it is properly a solo instrument, and from its correctness of intonation, and its excellence of tone it is a most effective addition to the orchestra. It is a soprano instrument, and its compass ranges from the uppermost F in the bass staff to C above the treble.

The *sax horn* also is a modern variety of the horn, and was introduced into this country about thirty-five years ago. There are four kinds—the treble, alto, tenor and bass, all of which execute the complete chromatic scale, and the pitch of each can be altered by means of a slide. Their form is similar to that of the bugle, and they have three pistons, which resemble in some degree those of the *cornet-a-piston*.

This whole great family of brass instruments have a cup-like mouthpiece, and are sounded by means of the vibration of the performer's lips—an operation which requires natural aptitude and much practice. There are some persons, the conformation of whose lips is an insurmountable obstacle to their playing well on the trumpet or cornet.

[To be continued.]

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Write legibly—Write concisely—Write impartially.
Reports of Concerts, Notices of Classes, etc., should reach us by the 15th of the month.
The name and address of the Sender must accompany all Correspondence.

MONTHLY NOTES.

A CONCERT, in aid of the Tynewidd Miners' Fund, was given at the Crystal Palace on June 6th, and was attended by a large audience. An interesting feature in the performance was the appearance of Gwilym Thomas, one of the rescuers of the imprisoned miners, who with Miss Mary Davies sang Mr. Richards's duet, *How beautiful is night*, and obtained an enthusiastic reception. A new song, *The men of Wales*, composed for the occasion by Mr. Richards, was sung by Madame Wynn. The Welsh Choral Union and the Crystal Palace Choir assisted: Mr. Manns was conductor.

Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir gave a successful performance of Handel's oratorio *Herules*, on June 8th.

The second triennial festival of the Associated Choirs, in the Archdeaconry of Worcester, was held in the Cathedral on June 13th. Not less than sixty-five choirs, mustering sixteen hundred voices, took part in the proceedings.

The Gloucester Musical Festival will be held in the Cathedral on September 4th and following days.

Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was performed at the Albert Hall on June 2nd. The concert was for the benefit of Mr. Carter.

Herr Richard Wagner, at a dinner given to him on his birthday (May 29th) alluded in the most affectionate and grateful terms to his friend, Mr. Ferdinand Praeger, who, he said, had never ceased—at one time single handed in England—to endeavour to bring about a true understanding of his works. He also mentioned that when he was here, twenty-two

years ago, a stranger, brought over by those who neither understood nor liked him, with a then all-powerful press against him, Mr. Praeger's was the ever friendly house where he always felt himself to be the welcome guest. This gratifying and well deserved tribute to an old friend was received with much applause, and Mr. Praeger's health was drunk with enthusiasm.

Musical Standard.

A pleasant little circumstance is connected with Mr. Santley's last visit to Liverpool. Mr. Santley, before he rose to his present position in public favour, was a member of the Societa Armonica, in the ranks of which he graduated till he reached the post of principle second violin. The other day he put in an appearance at one of the society's weekly rehearsals, and fiddled away to his heart's content. It need hardly be said that he was warmly welcomed by his old associates. A day or so later he sent a cheque for five guineas to Mr. Laidlaw, the president of the society, as a donation to its funds. He moreover expressed his desire to rejoin the amateurs, and promised to attend their meetings whenever he was in Liverpool, having enjoyed his recent "scrape" with them so much. It is gratifying to notice such a circumstance as this when so much is talked about artists who have deservedly risen to the greatest altitude, but who too often attempt to ignore precedents and forget old friends.

Liverpool Weekly Albion.

Not the least interesting part of last night's concert at the Albert Hall—the last of the Wagner series—was the manner in which the audience and the famous composer said "good bye" to each other. I ought also to include the members of the large and admirable orchestra, who came in for the most direct share of Herr Wagner's attentions. Plaudits behind him, plaudits before him, and to right and left of him, volleyed and thundered; and any person with less presence of mind than Herr Richard Wagner might have felt some embarrassment to know how to get out of it all. He did the best thing in the circumstances—walked backwards and forwards from one corner of the stage to the other, facing about to all quarters of the house in their turn, mounting steps and getting down again, bowing and smiling, and laying his hand on his heart. At last he mounted the conductor's chair, and, turning his back on the audience, addressed the performers in German, which one of themselves translated with far too great brevity into less eloquent English. Then turning round, as if uncertain how to leave off, Herr Wagner began another series of wanderings up and down behind the footlights. When he finally attempted to go away all the audience within

reach crowded to shake hands with him, or to give vent to their emotions in a more articulate fashion. The ladies especially seemed the most resolute in their little attentions; and if he had ventured among the area or amphitheatre stalls, the ladies would have put Herr Wagner through a course of hand-shaking that would have satisfied a candidate for the American Presidency. There was no 'insular reserve' there, I can assure you.

Manchester Guardian.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SYLLABIC TUNES.

To the Editor of the "Quaver."

Sir,—Some thirty years ago, commenced a period in musical history which may be termed the "syllabic tune era," and the frequenters of "quires and places where they sing" were startled to learn that choir and congregation had alike strayed from the paths of musical rectitude, and were using, Sunday after Sunday, tunes utterly unfit for the grand purposes of psalmody. The reformers held that a tune, in order to be suitable for use in Divine worship, must be syllabic—it should contain only one note for each syllable of the words. In course of time, the public were (really or apparently) converted; publishers commenced the work of purgation; and old tune books were remodelled, and new ones were compiled, in which the point of merit was the fact that all the tunes were strictly syllabic.

Time was when our churches were as plain as farm-houses, and our chapels as ugly as barns, and were considered quite the proper thing. In this respect we are better off than a former generation, but our psalmody has somehow become extremely plain and barn-like in style. I cannot help thinking that this return to the *ab-ab-ab*s of music is a change for the worse. No doubt, the reformers swept away much rubbish, but, no doubt also, they swept with it many good tunes which lived in the affections of the congregations: now I consider that a tune which the people really enjoy, and which will draw out the music that is in them, is too valuable to be thrown away.

But the reformers did more; and here, I think, they were altogether wrong. When a tune which was not in accordance with their syllabic views was deemed too firmly established to be easily smothered, they determined to *make* it syllabic. Therefore, they carefully cut away all the little extra notes which, like the buds, leaves and branching stalks of a flower, gave it beauty; and thus having reduced the tune to a state of nature—not of grace—they handed it to the choristers saying, "There—that's the way to sing it." I wonder they did not shave the heads of the singers while they were about it.

Now, I dissent from the syllabic theory: I do not find that Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, or any other of the great luminaries agree with it; nor is it adopted by the anthem composers, from Purcell down to the present time, who have created a national style of church music. Further, I assert that a compiler has no right to cut tunes about in order to make them syllabic: if a tune is good, leave it alone; if it is bad, let it go; but do not toss it into the tune book, naked and bleeding, and expect people who have known it in its better days to take kindly to it.

ALLEGRO.

The gymnastic Training of the Hand.

[The following, which is the concluding portion of a paper read at the Musical Association by Mr. Stephen S. Stratton on May 7th, is copied from the *Musical Standard*. The paper is exceedingly practical, and will prove interesting to many of our readers: laying the science of anatomy under contribution, the lecturer gives pianists, violinists, and others very useful hints on the training of the hand and finger. Wagner says—“When perfection has been reached in one art, it should be ‘oined to some other.’” Although Wagner thus wrote, possibly his ideas did not extend to a combination of anatomy with music: nevertheless, it is unquestionable that a knowledge of the former science, if practically applied in the work of physical training, must lighten and shorten the preparatory labours of the student. For the information of those who have not read the introductory part of Mr. Stratton’s paper, it is expedient to state that his method is founded upon, and endeavours to carry out, principles advocated by Mr. Ward Jackson in a work on Finger Gymnastics. The previous portions of Mr. Stratton’s paper appeared in the *Musical Standard* of May 12th and 19th.]

HOW seldom do we hear *music*, as compared with meaningless jingle! Of course, I refer to the mass of ordinary players, not to those finished artists who, aided by their genius, have succeeded in overcoming the tremendous difficulties of their education. As we can neither see, do, or think more than one thing at a time consciously, it follows that the attempt to do more must result in failure. Hence the long hours spent in pianoforte practice without scientific method only tend to destroy the action of the faculty most needed. Consciousness becomes deadened through exhaustion of the nerves of hearing. It is a familiar observation that an unvarying action on any of our senses has, when long-continued, the same effect as no action at all; a watchmaker is not conscious of the unintermittent ticking of his clocks, but were they all suddenly stopped he would at once become aware of the blank. A player at the pianoforte should be considered as an embodied *will*, having a certain end in view; and all the mechanism, mental and physical, so many means for the attainment of that end, and so trained that their work is done without interfering with the will in producing the intended effect. In other words, all actions but one must be reduced to secondary or cultivation reflex actions.

I am obliged to give this general view of the subject, as the hand only forms a part of the mechanism employed, and cannot be considered without reference to the whole. Reading music, rhythm, and phrasing, I do not propose to enlarge upon; but I am strongly of opinion, that much, in connection with them, can be done away from the key-board.

Coming, now, immediately to my subject;

what I propose doing is, to train the fingers to automatic action, and acquire complete control over the hand away from the piano, so as to give the performer a ready servant, instead of a tyrannical master.

The importance to my argument of much I have already said, will now be evident. Should any one ask, “How is this training to be done?” my answer may be rather surprising, when I say that we have more to *undo* than to *do*. I have stated, that, in the infant, the hand is absolutely powerless; its use is not instinctive. Now, that is important for us to remember. Our hand becomes what we, day by day, cause it to become. Before I consider this, however, I wish to prove that Mr. Jackson is not quite correct in stating that the fingers are the least exercised, and, consequently, the weakest parts of the body. His statement is a partial truth: *Are* the fingers still—in childhood especially? I know some young fingers I should like, at times, to be less active. No one can work physically without using their fingers; and even indolent and lazy people cannot keep them still; for, if not properly employed, we are informed who

“—finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

Again:—Are they so very weak? Look at the palmer muscles (Illustration). What is one of their uses? “In grasping with the hand, the strength with which it closes when all the muscles are combined in action, must be very great. The amount of power is exhibited when we see a sailor hanging by a rope, and raising his whole body with one arm. What must be the pressure upon the hand? If the palms, and inside of the fingers, and their tips, were not guarded by cushions beneath the skin, it would be too much for the texture even of bones and tendons, and certainly for the blood-vessels and nerves to sustain.” Any “three year’s child” will hold on a stick, and support the weight of his body by his hands. Is there anything in pianoforte playing calling for such exertion as this? Assuredly not. Further; try to bend the third joint of any finger. It is almost impossible. What, then, do we learn? Not that the fingers are little used, or weak, but that we have little control over them. In fact, we have never educated them; and we throw the blame on nature.

Dr. Radcliffe’s theory of muscular contraction seems to me to explain many things, especially with regard to this want of control over the fingers. Stated broadly, we may say that in musical performance, individual muscu-

lar action is the rule, and combined action the exception. In all other manual occupations, combined muscular action is the rule, and individual action the exception. To my thinking, these two movements are antagonistic. The infant's first action with its fingers is to grasp whatever comes within its reach. From infancy the habit is retained, and lasts as long as life lasts (physically and morally); until "grasp" becomes the moth of mankind, and "close-fisted" passes into a proverb. Now, if we from childhood are constantly using our fingers in combination, we are doing our best to render it impossible to use them singly. The electric discharge is diffused over the whole muscle, or series of muscles, causing such strong sympathy between them, that the utmost effort of the will to isolate or localize its effect all but fails. This sympathy extends, in a measure, to the two hands and arms; and, by long usage, has been converted into a reflex action. In all sudden starts the arms go together; and it is easier to move any corresponding finger, than, say, the second finger of one hand and the thumb of the other.

This "sympathy" affords, I think, a satisfactory explanation of what was an enigma to Mr. Jackson: that men who worked as blacksmiths, etc., and had arms like giants, and muscles of steel, could not use their fingers. Men who work with their arms, work also with their fingers (we have seen that the most powerful muscles of the fingers are situated in the arm), but the action is combined; and, being long combined, independence of the fingers is lost beyond recovery. It also explains—if we allow of the ligaments and tendons stiffening—the helplessness and fatigue which ensues on resuming an instrument long neglected. The faculty of independent action once possessed, is lost; and the effort required to overcome "sympathy" is mistaken for weakness in the muscle.

If individual action could be acquired before "sympathy" sets in too strongly, much time, I feel convinced, would be saved in learning to play the piano. This subject I consider so important, that I seriously commend it to all having the care of young pupils.

The muscles that are undeveloped for want of exercise are the extensors on the back of the arm, and those which move the fingers *laterally*—situate in the hand itself. Those used in "grasping" are already strong enough for all practical purposes, and require "curbing," if anything. Ask pianoforte students where they first experience fatigue, and in nine cases out of ten they will say on the back of the arm.

For these muscles I would propose table practice, as the ear is spared; and, to render

the action automatic from the first, I would recommend the student to read, or study, while he is exercising the fingers. The hand should be placed upon the table, with the points of the fingers (which should be extended laterally) a line touching it, the wrist held much higher than the knuckles; and, for support, the elbow may rest on the table. The action is to be key-board practice reversed. The whole effort to be made in *raising* the fingers as high as possible, keeping them slightly bent; and descending upon the table very gently. Any order of five finger exercise will do. As soon as the fingers are started, the student should endeavour to fix his attention on his book (Illustration). Each hand should be exercised separately. Afterwards, the fingers should be raised in alternate pairs—still extended laterally. Many who play thirds fluently on the piano, will find this exercise—with the left hand especially—much more difficult than key-board work. The fingers must be raised as high as possible, as in the preceding exercises. The velocity gained in the fall from a high position is an added force, as mechanicians know. These exercises should afterwards be performed with the fingers lying flat upon the table. At first, each hand should be worked for a short time only, and the period gradually increased. For evenness in the down-stroke of the fingers, the pupil may use the eigitorium for a short time, and only overcoming key resistance. The following, which I extract from Carl Tausig's "Daily Studies," (Book 2, No. 26) should then be played on the piano, softly throughout, and with fingers raised after striking the keys. You will observe there are four harmonic combinations in each key, commencing in C, and rising chromatically till C is reached an octave higher. Each hand to be used separately, as the fingers moving in the same order strengthen the "sympathy" it is our object to destroy. This exercise is very good for bringing the greatest number of muscles into action, and once playing will be found quite enough at a time.

These exercises for raising the fingers will be found most useful also to violinists, and players upon such wind instruments as the flute, clarinet, &c. In the early stages of progress, the difficulty of lifting the fingers independently is much greater than that of pressing them down, especially in the practice of shakes.

The next series of exercises I submit are for more effectually destroying "sympathy," and acquiring individual action.

First place the hands (fingers straight) flat upon the table; then, taking the second finger as a central line, remove the thumb, first,

fourth, and third fingers as far as possible from it, finally moving the second fingers right and left. The fingers should glide along the surface of the table, and not be raised. Then reverse the process, and draw the fingers in order towards the centre. This should be done several times by each hand separately. Afterwards, it may be practised with the hand raised; and it will not be found quite so easy to accomplish.

Next, for individual action in the *flexor* and *extensor* muscles. Here it is impossible to act on a single muscle; but "sympathy" may be reduced to the least degree. Extend the fingers laterally, and try to move the third joint only of any one. This is so difficult, that its performance is regarded as something wonderful. The principal difficulty lies in the antagonistic action of the two sets of muscles, and the strong "sympathy" between the *flexors* of the second and third joints. This "sympathy" must at first be overcome by force. Wedges must be placed to keep the lower joints in position while the upper joints are bent and straightened; then two joints together are to be moved; and, finally, the whole finger, which must be kept straight. Then the exercises may be tried with the hand free. The first of these may seem of little moment, as we never play with a single joint; but I submit that the neglect of this joint is an oversight, and its weakness causes a yielding at the instant of contact, which in many cases materially lessens the tone it was intended to produce. There is sufficient yielding afforded by the elastic cushion of the finger-tip, which is further supplemented by the loose wrist. To violinists, the strength and power of bending in the third joint is most important; for, if not bent before the second joint, the flexor tendon, imprisoned in the angle, cannot act, and the top joint is rendered powerless. The thumb and wrist are sufficiently provided for in Mr. Jackson's work; but "imaginary" octaves, sixths, and thirds—*staccato*—may, with advantage, be practised on the table, in order to render the wrist flexible and graceful in its movements. If you draw the thumb away from the hand, and then across the palm as far as possible, you exercise nearly all the muscles, and prepare it for scale practice.

Just a word about the left hand. We all know that it is weaker and less capable of exertion than the right; but few go to much trouble to ascertain the cause. Sir Charles Bell says—"The universal consent to give the preference to the right hand over the left can-

not be a conventional agreement: it must have a natural source. It is not the result of habit, but a natural provision for a very obvious purpose—promptness of action, where hesitation would be dangerous. Moreover, the whole left side of the body is weaker than the right." Such being the case, there is much force and common sense in the "petition" of the left hand for equal education with the right, which is found in the writings of Dr. Franklin. In the physical training of the left hand, great care is necessary, on account of its comparative weakness.

We must remember that exertion, whether of mind or body, consumes vital force; consequently, when severe and long-continued, instead of giving strength it produces exhaustion. My aim in training the hand is less for gaining strength than for acquiring control. Excessive key-board practice is, in my opinion, very injurious; and for delicate young pupils absolutely dangerous. They are frequently called upon to exert themselves to the utmost of their strength, and when that is the case there is no capability of mental effort. Fingers working without mind reduce art to the level of conjuring. Moreover, this excessive practice is destructive of all enthusiasm, without which, as Schumann truly says, nothing genuine is accomplished in art. Everything at the key-board—even scales and exercises—should be made artistic: the severance of the purely physical from the artistic is, therefore, not an unreasonable proposal.

This hand training not being in itself intellectual, the time it occupies may be profitably employed by the student in mental culture. Musicians are often reproached for their lack of other than musical knowledge, and sometimes for want of that too; pianists are considered inferior in musical feeling (I honestly believe, where this is the case, it is owing to their being literal slaves of the key-board, and stupified with their incessant toil) to musicians generally: anything that will enable them to become better informed and truer artists is, therefore, worthy of serious attention.

The exercises I have suggested for young students, with moderate daily use of Mr. Jackson's "Gymnastics," will, I feel convinced, amply suffice for physical training. The student will find his key-board work what it should be—art work. Hands, trained and obedient, will enable him with one act of volition to reflect as it were upon the keys the impressions received from written notes, or mental conceptions.

